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ADDRESS

BY

REV. DR. SAMUEL G. BUCKINGHAM,

OF

SPRINGFIELD, MASS.,

BROTHER OF LEBANON'S SECOND WAR GOVERNOR.

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DR. BUCKINGHAM'S ADDRESS.

Mr. President and People of Connecticut :

I am not, I suppose, one of the Sons of the Revolution, but I claim to be a true and loyal son of Connecticut. Though I have spent all my professional life in Massachusetts, and cherish the profoundest respect for her institutions and people, still I was born and trained here. Our ancestor was one of the original settlers of the New Haven Colony, and one of his sons bore a leading part in the organization of your churches and in the founding and rectorship of Yale College. And familiar as I am with your achievements, is it strange that I honor and love my native State? Especially since you selected my brother to be your Governor, when the war for the Union was coming on, and so nobly sustained him and the Union until all opposition to it was put down, and slavery, the cause of all our dissensions, was forever removed, do you wonder that my heart turns admiringly and gratefully to you, and always will under whatever skies I may chance to find myself? Since the State put \$2,000,000 at his disposal at the outset of the war for the purposes of the war, and at his suggestion loaned the credit of the State to the General Government to sustain its credit, and furnished soldiers at his call till every quota called for was supplied without ever submitting to a draft, and when you withheld not your noblest sons from the sacrifices of war, and so many of them went forth never to return,—can one brought up among them, with their principles in his heart, if not their blood in his veins, fail to admire them and the State that trained them to be such patriots?

God's best gift to Lebanon was its first settlers. Captain Joseph Trumbull, the first of the name here, and the founder of the Lebanon branch of the family, settled here in 1704, just after the town was organized. He was a farmer and a merchant, and subsequently engaged, with his sons, in foreign commerce, building vessels of their own on the Thames and the Connecticut, and exchanging their exports for imports from the West Indies, England, and Holland. He had eight children, four sons and four daughters, of whom his oldest son, Joseph, his partner in business and supercargo of one of their ships, was lost at sea, and David, the youngest, was drowned in the mill-pond at home on his college vacation. Jonathan, the "War Governor," had just graduated from college and finished his preparation for the ministry, and was to have been settled in Colchester, when his brother was lost at sea, and he felt constrained to abandon the ministry and go to the assistance of his father. Here he acquired that business knowledge and ability which proved so valuable when he came to administer the affairs of the State and succor Washington and his army in their extremity. No wonder General Washington looked to him with hope when he could find help nowhere else, saying, "Let us see what Brother Jonathan can do for us"; and little wonder that he found it when the State responded with such contributions and sacrifices to the appeals of their heroic Governor.

The Governor's own family was as follows:

JOSEPH, born March, 1737, was Commissary-General of Washington's army.

JONATHAN, JR., born March 26, 1740, was Paymaster in Washington's army, and afterwards Governor of the State.

FAITH, born Jan. 25, 1743, married Gen. Jedediah Huntington, of the Revolutionary army.

MARY, born July 16, 1745, married William Williams, "signer of the Declaration of Independence."

EAVID, born Feb. 5, 1751, was Assistant Commissary, etc., and father of Governor Joseph.

JOHN, born June 6, 1756, was Aid-de-Camp to Washington, and the renowned painter.

To say that this whole family filled so many high positions with distinguished ability and fidelity; that the father filled every civil and judicial office of the State, from one of the deputies of the town to the General Court, to the speakership of the House of Representatives, and from Judge of Probate to the office of the Chief Justice of the Superior and Supreme Courts, before he became Governor; that the sons all filled their military offices with honor, and especially in departments which required the highest financial integrity and ability, and when the youngest showed such peculiar aptitude for the military profession, and yet turned away from it to become the historical painter of his country, and make the panels of the Capitol at Washington the memorial of his genius; and that the daughters each adorned her sphere with equal grace and patriotism; and, to say no more, is honor enough for one household.

Add to this the WILLIAMS family, that married into the Trumbull family. Rev. Solomon Williams, D.D., who was for fifty-four years the pastor here, belonged to the family of those who suffered the barbarities of captivity that attended the burning of Deerfield by the Indians in 1704. One of his sons, Eliphalet, was pastor of the church in East Hartford some fifty years, and another, Ezekiel, was for thirty years high sheriff of Hartford county, and he the father of one of the Chief Justices of Connecticut. Dr. Williams might well have been the father of one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, judging from the jubilant sermon he preached on the surrender of Quebec in 1759, when a general thanksgiving was observed, and he so well appreciated the importance of it, regarding "the conquest of Quebec, the capital of Canada, as of more importance than has ever been made by the English since

England was a nation." His son William, — usually styled Colonel William Williams — the one who immortalized himself by signing that Declaration of Independence, graduated at Harvard College and studied for the ministry with his father, but joined the English and Continental forces in the old French war, on the staff of his cousin, Colonel Ephraim Williams, who fell in that campaign. Of ardent temperament, beautiful in person, eloquent of speech, and capable of inspiring others with his own convictions and patriotism, he went over the State arousing the people to their danger and their duty, while his brother-in-law, David Trumbull, was buying up all the pork in the State, and collecting gunpowder and clothing from every quarter, to enable our poor army to keep the field. The man who would risk his life to secure our independence, and impoverished himself to maintain the cause, might well be regarded as the apostle of Liberty, and the most efficient supporter of the patriotic Governor. When the outlook was darkest, and one of the Council of Safety expressed the hope that we might yet be successful, he replied: "If we fail, I know what my fate will be. I have done much to prosecute the war, and one thing which the British will never pardon, I have signed the Declaration of Independence. *I shall be hung!*" "Well," said another member of the Council, "if we fail, I don't know that I could be hung. For my name is not attached to that Declaration, nor have I written anything against the British government." "Then," said Williams, "*you ought to be hung for not doing your duty.*" As has been said of him: "With tongue, pen, and estate he gave himself to the cause of the colonies. During the gloomy winter of 1777 he sent beef, cattle, and gold to Valley Forge, saying, 'If independence shall be established, I shall get my pay; if not, the loss will be of no account to me.'"

Another of those families was the MASON family, not only distinguished by their natural characteristics and practical ability, but by their high descent. They were

the descendants of Major John Mason, of Pequot fame, and the first proprietor of land within the limits of the town. The Colony gave him for his services five hundred acres of land, and much more was purchased of the Indians, until he was the chief proprietor of the whole township. Fifty years ago, three of his descendants, two sons and a daughter, with large families, were influential people in the town, and not only noted for their noble personal appearance, but as well for their business ability and public spirit. Another of them was Jeremiah Mason, the famous Massachusetts lawyer, and contemporary of Mr. Webster, who paid such a beautiful tribute before the Boston bar to his abilities and worth. But the most remarkable characteristic of this family was — as has been shown in Chancellor Walworth's "Genealogy of the Hyde Family" (Vol. II, page 926) — that they were descended from William the Conqueror, from the Plantagenets of England, Matilda of Scotland, Louis the Fair of France, and from Charlemagne, the great Emperor of the West, and with blue blood enough in their veins to stock a kingdom.

Such were some of the people who had the early guidance of affairs and the shaping of public sentiment in this New England town. And such were some of the moulding influences which made the State what it was and shaped our general government; and wherever they have been carried by emigration, must have been a blessing, as they have been here.* The springs where

* When I was a boy, emigration from this town was going on to "Ohio," — Ohio — "Genesee county," in and about Rochester, N. Y., and "up county," which meant Vermont. Dartmouth College, under Pres. Wheelock, then "Moore's Charity School" for the education of Indian youth, had been taken up almost bodily and transported from Columbia, then a part of this town, to Hanover, N. H., just across the river. And so many of the settlers went with it from this vicinity that twenty or more of the neighboring towns in Vermont bear the names of Connecticut towns from which the settlers came. Indeed, the State had so much of this settlement in it that it was named "New Connecticut," and the name was only changed because there were other settlements of similar origin taking the same name — like the "New Connecticut" in the Susquehanna Valley, and the "New Connecticut" of Northern Ohio, both of which distinctly show the characteristics of their origin.

mountain streams take their rise, and flow down through fertile plains, and alongside of wealthy cities, to enrich the commerce of the world, and bless its countless inhabitants, are interesting spots to visit, and suggestive of what smaller towns may have done for the world and are likely to do in the future.

The *list of Governors* which this town has furnished to the State is certainly remarkable, both in number and character, especially considering its population and business. Entirely an agricultural town, with never more than three (3,000) thousand inhabitants, it has filled the chair of State with such men as these, and for such terms of office:

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|--------------|
| Jonathan Trumbull, Sr., | - | 1769 to 1784 |
| Jonathan Trumbull, Jr., | - | 1798 to 1809 |
| Clark Bissell, - | - | 1847 to 1849 |
| Joseph Trumbull, - | - | 1849 to 1850 |
| William A. Buckingham, | - | 1858 to 1866 |

Here are five Governors from the same town, holding the office by annual election for one-third of a century, and filling the office with becoming dignity and distinguished usefulness. We do not wonder at the pleasant boast of the people of the town:—“*We supply Norwich with butter and cheese, and the State with Governors, especially when they want good ones.*”

The TRUMBULL TOMB, where so many of the family and their kindred sleep, is an object of peculiar interest. As has been said: “Within this family mausoleum rest the sacred ashes of more of the illustrious dead than in any other in the State, or perhaps the country. Here rest the remains of that eminently great and good Jonathan Trumbull, Sr., the bosom friend and most trusted counsellor of Washington; of his good wife, Faith Robinson; of his eldest son, Joseph, the first Commissary-General of the army under Washington; of his second son, Jonathan, Jr., Paymaster-General of the same army, private secretary, and first Aid-de-Camp to General Washington,

and afterward Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, member of the United States Senate, and Governor of this State; and by his side his good wife, Eunice Backus; of his third son, David, Commissary of this Colony in the Revolution, and Assistant-Commissary-General under his brother in the army of Washington, and by his side his good wife, Sarah Backus; of his second daughter, Mary, and by her side her illustrious husband, William Williams, one of the signers of the immortal Declaration of Independence,—and many others who have from these descended. What a tomb is here! What a shrine for patriotic devotion!" —[Rev. Mr. Hine's "Early Lebanon."]

As I have stood before that tomb with my brother, I can think of nothing so likely to have inspired him with his patriotism as this. Sure I am, that next to his duty to God, no stronger motive influenced him than the desire to be to his State and country somewhat such as Trumbull was in the War of the Revolution. And the heroic statue to his memory, which you have set up in your State Capitol, like the one erected to the honor of his predecessor in the National Capitol, will carry down their names together to posterity,—the one as "*the War Governor of the Revolution*," and the other as "*the War Governor of the Rebellion*."

It is the memory of such spotless and noble characters; the places where they were born, and lie sleeping; the associations of their early lives, and the scenes of their active usefulness, which serve to influence and ennoble us. And it is to revive and deepen such impressions and transmit them to others that we gather in this old historic town, and set apart, with appropriate services, Governor Trumbull's War Office to such uses. It is only a plain wooden building, built by the Governor for a store, but where most of the twelve hundred sessions of the Council of Safety were held during the war. Here is where Washington and so many of the leading men of the times came to consult him, and where some

of the important expeditions of the war were planned. It is generally understood that the meeting here of so many of the commanders of the French land forces and the officers of their navy with our own statesmen and commanders had reference to the combined expedition against Yorktown, which terminated the war, though the final determination might have been reached at "the Webb Tavern" in Wethersfield — a humble building, but ennobled by the great men who gathered there, the noble plans projected there, the great achievements carried out to their sublime results from such a place. It is the glory which sunshine gives to a humble flower; the glory of modest worth and faithful usefulness; the glory somewhat which Heaven sheds over a sainted soul: —

" Sacred the robe, the faded glove,
Once worn by one we used to love ;
Dead warriors in their armor live,
And in their relics saints survive."

As we have thus re-read this chapter of your history, we have been more than ever impressed with the influence of individual characters and families and noble deeds upon a town, a State, the country. It is men and women that make history, and it is history, in turn, that makes them of coming generations; it is parents who transmit their own characteristics; it is the family that moulds the children; it is such characters and such families which are the wealth of the nation; it is their principles and achievements which are the cherished treasures of our State and of the country. And so we reckon them among God's best gifts to any community. But for these how changed would our condition be, and how different our history? If our old Puritan Governor had been no more patriotic than the rest of them; if his son-in-law had not affixed his signature to that immortal declaration; if his sons, in the commissary department of the army, had not been so efficient and incorruptible in the management of its affairs; if France

had not sent Lafayette and her army and her navy to our assistance ; if the last expedition of the war had not been planned in that old War Office—how changed would have been the result ! And we are grateful to God—supremely grateful—for such a result. His Providence settled the town with such families, and trained such characters. The same good Providence gave us the sympathy and aid of the French nation. And the God of battles gave us the final victory. We bow with reverent and grateful hearts before this God of our fathers ; and He shall be our God, as well as theirs, forever and ever.

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